

Notes from Mastering Change – Winning Strategies for Effective City Planning
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and President of the American Planning Association) and Ray Quay

Anthony Catanese – “if planners are to be considered good managers of change and responsive to both politicians and special interest groups, they must concern themselves with only a limited number of issues that are definable, concrete and solvable.

Recognizing that an excessive number of goals and policies discouraged the implementation of traditional comprehensive plans, they chose to limit their plan to only five primary goals. Their approach made it easy for the local commissioners to deliver a concise and consistent message that was easily understood and accepted by the community.

Strategic planning clearly is not comprehensive planning nor does comprehensive planning result in strategic decision making

The major failure of many comprehensive plans has been trying to do too much at once. In the end, those issues that were easy to address, but unimportant, got done. Those that were hard to address, but important, never got done.

Strategic planning has more of a bias for action than comprehensive planning. It focuses on the important issues and provides a clear direction. Using strategic planning to overcome the stigma of ineffective comprehensive planning is a classic example of making lemonade out of lemons.

Effectiveness depends on concentrating resources in a few critical priority areas. Planners and local government officials, in general, must avoid the temptation of trying to overcome ineffectiveness by putting more resources and energy into becoming more efficient.

For too many years comprehensive planning has been ineffective because it has been a product in search of a client

Peter Drucker noted that “the test of a good plan is whether management actually commits resources to action which will bring results in the future.